

THE FLORIDA AGRICULTURIST

DEVOTED TO
A JOURNAL
STATE INTERESTS

VOL. XXXIII No. 16.

Jacksonville and DeLand, Fla., Wednesday, May 9, 1906.

Whole No. 1647.

President's Annual Address Before The Florida State Horticultural Society, 1906.

Members of the Florida State Horticultural Society; Ladies and Gentlemen:

This audience will forgive me while I indulge in some retrospection. It is worth while sometimes to lift the veil of the past and behold the achievements of the then actors. That picture reveals to us lessons which suggest progress, hope and advancement. At the outset of this address, it is well for me to take my bearings and to see what is the duty I have assigned myself. To see and to study the standards that have been set for me in the similar efforts of the past; to study the men and the times that have produced the annual addresses of the past eighteen years.

Our Society came forth almost full-fledged from its birth. In response to the demands of the times, it immediately took its place among the great Horticultural Societies of the age. Fortunately, it had as its first president, one of those rugged, fearless and intrepid characters that were transplanted, decades ago, from the great prairies of the Northwest to the tropical and sub-tropical conditions of our state. With the accumulated wisdom and experience of a lifetime, he led the van in the early years of the society's history and led them with unvarying satisfaction and success. In its first decade it had become so prominent that it received and entertained with success some of the foremost scientists of this and other lands. The energy and persistence, the skill and faith, the merit and the accomplishment of its first president, Dudley W. Adams, are now matters of history. After all it is acts not words, that count in the life impression one leaves upon his age and generation. Judge by this standard what a splendid life was his. It is my duty as well as my pleasure, to put on record the high appreciation this society feels today for its first president after he has for well nigh a decade, felt upon his face the breath of the Eternal morning.

Good foundations, like good principles and good practices, never fail to bequeath to subsequent generations their manifold blessings.

In studying the history of our Society during this period of eighteen

years, I find impressed upon this latter half, the large-hearted, good-natured, genial personality and natural ability of its last president, George L. Taber.

How fortunate our Society was when called upon to bear a sudden vacancy in its Chief Executive, that one so able, so thoroughly equipped for its duties, so willing to bear and forebear, should be ready trained at hand. The annual addresses of President Taber always contained a message of importance to the Society. In times of progress and prosperity it brought congratulations and good cheer. In times of adversity, it brought hope, courage and manhood, and faith in skill and science to overcome difficulties or adverse climatic conditions. His cheery tones were ever on the side of optimism, were ever turning towards the bright side of the picture of horticultural struggle and endeavor in this state, were ever pointing to new means of combatting the elements, of overcoming the natural enemies of our chosen industries and bolstering up those of less faith and courage. Through all these annual addresses runs the constant tone of enlargement and improvement. Constantly increasing in power, thought and literary finish, his last annual address became a fitting climax to the long series of addresses with which he has enriched the literature of our Society. I can well imagine his feelings when preparing his "Message from the Woods." Like that felt by Bryant when he wrote his *Thanatopsis*, when he gave to his age, in poetry, his conception of a proper appreciation of nature and natural surroundings. Like him feels John Burroughs, the nature lover, the poet and admirer of the brook, the field, the orchard and the forest. How much of beauty and poetic feeling and love of nature and nature's God are embodied in the president's last annual address, only future generations shall fully appreciate.

Of retrospection this is sufficient. The past at least is secure. Our Society, having passed safely the rapids of its upper course and glided successfully along into its middle course, now moves forward in the direction of its lower and broader course. It has met the questions of the past. It has accumulated wisdom by experience. It should be, and doubtless it is today, well equipped to meet the questions

of the present, to maintain the reputation of the past and to lay broad and deep foundations for the achievements of the future. The problems of today are not more difficult than in the past, but they are more complex and diverse. There are in them a greater number of factors even if each factor is of less vitality. What message does the present bring to us?

What duty do we owe the today? What accomplishments can the tomorrow claim logically founded upon today? Are there messages that the horticultural conditions of the state at this moment require bringing to your attention? Fortunately we stand in the presence of no calamity. We do not surround, as we have sometimes done in the past, those conditions that buried the hopes of thousands of our people. But even those clouds had their silver lining, unseen then, but plainly visible now. We are in the midst of prosperity long continued and pronounced. Our industries have been enlarged both in number and in volume. Our output is greatly increased in every department of horticulture. Our sources of knowledge, our ability to handle the drawbacks, the pests and the evils of our diversified industries have been largely increased. What then is there to consider? It frequently happens that the most dangerous periods are those of greatest prosperity. It has been well said that, "Security is mortal's chiefest enemy."

In the line of thought I shall take tonight, I may be straying from the beaten path, may be leading the way into battle fields where the valiant, the sagacious and the steadfast of purpose alone can be found at the front. The commercial battles of the present dwarf into insignificance the battles with insects, with climatic conditions, with all our other obstacles combined. The struggle for new markets, for cheaper production, for fairer treatment by our agents in the markets, for fair rates and rapid transit, do not these demand our attention and challenge the best brains among us? Of what avail is it that we devote our time and capital to the problems of production if the other and more complex problems of economy, distribution, transportation, receive not their proper attention. These things are as much a part of our legitimate business as the cultivation of the soil, the fertilizer we

shall use or the various matters of every day occurrence. What man is there before me who has not felt like this? The season has been a good one, I have fertilized judiciously and wisely, I have cultivated, I have sprayed, I have spared no pains to produce a fine crop. How shall I market it to the best advantage? Have you not realized that you were then confronted with harder conditions than those of production and ones less within your control or management?

The original scope of our Society being much narrower than its present one curtailed the range of topics considered at our meetings to a very narrow margin. The original thought of the founders of this Society was to make it apply almost exclusively to orange growing, to citrus fruits and their allied subjects. As the years have come and gone its scope has been widened so that it now covers, not only semitropical, but also tropical fruits, vegetables and many of the fruits of the temperate zone. This enlargement of its sphere has injected into it new relations and new problems for annual consideration. Let us briefly discuss a few of the important items worthy of thought. This is an age of organization, co-operation and consolidation. It is not sufficient that the horticulturist of today knows how to produce the fruits and the products of the soil, but that he knows as well how to successfully transport, distribute and market them. Perhaps the largest field for present and future investigation is the one covering the problem of marketing. This problem involves the element of business experience and study of the relations of the cost of production and transportation to the market value of our products; the study of the laws of supply and demand as applied to each particular product; a study of the value of organization in the securing of reasonable and satisfactory rates of transportation; of the proper commissions to be paid our selling agents; and the proper distribution of the crop so as to prevent surplus in one portion of the country and deficiency in another. Were there no such thing as organized effort among those whose financial interests are opposed to ours there should be no necessity for organization on our part. The value of farmers and fruit growers' organizations is in direct proportion to the